

TAB

LECTURE OUTLINE

STRATEGY AND TACTICS: Political Action

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## LECTURE OUTLINE

### STRATEGY AND TACTICS: Political Action

#### I. Introduction

There is a complete separation between the character (Strategy) of a CP and the action (tactics) which it undertakes at any given moment (i.e., Germany, Trieste, Jerusalem)

A. From a political intelligence point of view, our first interest is in the facts concerning party action.

B. From the PA, PW point of view, we must differentiate between the PARTY SEEKING POWER, and the PARTY IN POWER, each of which situations has its own peculiar character;

1. When the PARTY IS SEEKING POWER (not in power), the PA and task is:

a. to struggle against the party within the EXISTING political system and,

b. to prevent the party from controlling or manipulating existing political forces to the benefit of the WCM.

2. When the PARTY IS IN POWER (Stalinist) our first PA and PW aim is:

a. to destroy it as a useful tool of the USSR and the CPSU;

b. to weaken it internally without creating the opportunity for the USSR to regain control (Mao, Tito, etc.)

c. to assist in the destruction of the CP by political forces of which we approve. (separation of the masses from the Party).

#### II. Characteristics of Communist Actions

A. Predetermined Choice of means

B. Defined Goal (announced and known)

C. Unity of Action -- democratic centralism (decisions of lower organs subject to approval of higher echelons)

D. Unity of Will -- Monolithic discipline

III. Types of CP Action (Tactics)

A. Political Action

1. Open parliamentary struggle: blocs, alliances, people's fronts, etc.
2. Clandestine sub-parliamentary struggle:
  - a. infiltration and penetration, manipulation of non-communist organizations, etc. from "above" or "below".
  - b. subversion and coercion; of non-communist political and other organizational leadership; from "above" or "below".
  - c. etc.

B. Politico-economic Action

1. political strikes (Europe)
2. economic sabotage (various forms of) as political provocation, Tudeh, Dock-workers, Anti-Ridgeway strikes, etc.)
3. Passive resistance (boycott, etc.)
4. Others

C. Politico-Military Action

In direct or indirect support of USSR or the Satellites in case of an armed (hot) aggression; (Togliatti, Thorez pronouncements)

D. Insurrectionary Action (discussed separately)

1. Armed political struggle to discredit government, labor unity, national unity (non-Communist sponsored), etc.
2. National liberation and other movements: (open rebellions)

E. Consolidation Action:

Within areas taken over by the Communists

IV. Conclusion

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To synthesize for purposes of our guidance then: we must remember that: every Communist Party (Stalinist), internally, is a political organization of a disciplined, authoritarian type, which is designed to lead and seize power in a class struggle.

A. The political action (EXTERNAL) carried out by the party is the manipulation of existing political forces within the existing political system, in order that both may be replaced by a new system and new force.

B. The proper use of CP political action now is:

1. to disrupt and weaken the opposition to the USSR
2. to create an environment in which USSR action (as a state) can operate effectively;
3. to provide a pool of willing collaborators from whom useful, reliable, and indigenous administrators of USSR policy can be drawn (Double citizens, etc.)

C. In other words each CP is a political organization which is designed to assist the USSR and the CPSU in the seizure of power in the world revolutionary struggle, in order that the non-Communist authority may be replaced by an extension of the Soviet system and of the centrally controlled political force represented by the CPSU under the leadership of the Russians.

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APPENDIX

I. Communism. The Struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and the Utilization of the Bourgeois Parliament

1. Parliamentarism as a State system, has become a "democratic" form of the rule of the bourgeoisie which, at a certain stage of its development, needs the fiction of national representation, which outwardly would be an organization of a "national will" standing outside of classes, but in reality is an instrument of oppression and suppression in the hands of the ruling capitalists.

2. Parliamentarism is a definite form of State order. Therefore it can in no way be a form of Communist society, which recognizes neither classes, nor class struggle, nor any form of State authority,

3. Parliamentarism cannot be a form of proletarian government during the transition period between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat. At the moment when the accentuated class struggle turns into civil war, the proletariat must inevitably form its State organization as a fighting organization, which cannot contain any of the representatives of the former ruling classes; all fictions of a "national will" are harmful to the proletariat at that time, and a parliamentary division of authority is needless and injurious to it; the only form of proletarian dictatorship is a Republic of Soviets.

4. The bourgeois parliaments, which constitute one of the most important instruments of the State machinery of the bourgeoisie, cannot be won over by the proletariat any more than can the bourgeois order in general. The task of the proletariat consists in blowing up the whole machinery of the bourgeoisie, in destroying it, and all the parliamentary institutions with it, whether they be republican or constitutional-monarchical.

5. The same relates to the local government institutions of the bourgeoisie, which theoretically it is not correct to differentiate from State organizations. In reality they are part of the same apparatus of the State machinery of the bourgeoisie which must be destroyed by the revolutionary proletariat and replaced by local Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

6. Consequently, Communism repudiates parliamentarism as the form of the future; it renounces the same as a form of the class dictatorship of the proletariat; it repudiates the possibility of winning over the parliaments; its aim is to destroy parliamentarism. Therefore it is only possible to speak of utilizing the bourgeois State organizations with the object of destroying them. The question can be discussed only and exclusively on such a plane.

7. All class struggle is a political struggle, because it is finally a struggle for power. Any strike, when it spreads through the whole country, is a menace to the bourgeois State, and thus acquires a political character. To strive to overthrow the bourgeoisie, and to destroy its State, means to carry on political warfare. To create one's own class apparatus -- for the bridling and suppression of the resisting bourgeoisie, whatever such an apparatus may be -- means to gain political power.

8. Consequently, the question of a political struggle does not end in the question of one's attitude towards the parliamentary system. It is a general condition of the class struggle of the proletariat, insofar as the struggle grows from a small and personal one to a general struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist order as a whole.

9. The elementary means of the struggle of the proletariat against the rule of the bourgeois is, first of all, the method of mass demonstrations. Such mass demonstrations are prepared and carried out by the organized masses of the proletariat, under the direction of a united, disciplined, centralized Communist Party. Civil war is war. In this war the proletariat must have its efficient political officers, its good political general staff, to conduct operations during all the stages of that fight.

10. The mass struggle means a whole system of developing demonstrations growing ever more acute in form, and logically leading to an uprising against the capitalist order of government. In this warfare of the masses developing into a civil war, the guiding party of the proletariat must, as a general rule, secure every and all lawful positions, making them its auxiliaries in the revolutionary work, and subordinating such positions to the plans of the general campaign, that of the mass struggle.

11. One such auxiliary support is the rostrum of the bourgeois parliament. Against participation in a political campaign one should not use the argument that parliament is a bourgeois government institution. The Communist Party enters such institutions not for the purpose of organization work, but in order to blow up the whole bourgeois machinery and the parliament itself from within (for instance, the work of Liebknecht in Germany, of the Bolsheviks in the Imperial Duma, in the "Democratic Conference," in the "Parliament" of Kerensky, and lastly, in the "Constituent Assembly," and also in the Municipal Dumas, and the activities of the Bulgarian Communists.)

12. This work within the parliaments, which consists chiefly in making revolutionary propaganda from the parliamentary platform, the denouncing of enemies, the ideological unification of the masses, who are still looking up to the parliamentary platform, captivated by democratic illusions, especially in backward territories, etc., must be fully subordinated to the objects and tasks of the mass struggle outside the parliaments.

The participation in the elective campaign and the revolutionary propaganda from the parliamentary tribune has a special importance for the winning over of those elements of the workers, who -- as perhaps the agrarian working masses -- have stood far away from the revolutionary movement and political life.

13. If the Communists have the majority in the local government institutions, they must: a) carry on a revolutionary opposition against the bourgeois central authority; b) do all for the aid of the poor population (economic measures, establishment or attempt to establish an armed workers' militia; c) point out on every occasion the barriers which the bourgeois State power puts against really great changes; d) develop on this basis the sharpest revolutionary propaganda without fearing a conflict with the State authorities; e) under certain conditions substitute local Workers' Councils for the municipal administration. The whole activity of the Communists in the communal administration therefore must be a part of the general work of destruction of the capitalistic system.

14. The elective campaign must be carried on not in the sense of obtaining a maximum of votes, but in that of a revolutionary mobilization of the masses around the mottoes of the proletarian revolution. The election campaign must be conducted by the entire mass of party members, not by the leaders alone; it is necessary to make use of and be in complete touch with all the manifestations of the masses (strikes, demonstrations, movements among the soldiers and sailors, etc.) going on at the moment; it is necessary to summon all the masses of the proletarian organizations to active work.



15. In complying with all these conditions, as well as with those indicated in a special instruction, the parliamentary work must present a direct contrast to the dirty "politics" which has been practised by the Social Democratic parties of all countries, that enter parliament with the object of supporting that "democratic" institution or, at best, to "win it over." The Communist Party can only recommend a revolutionary use of the parliament as exemplified by Karl Kiebknecht, Haeglund and the Bolsheviks.

16. "Anti-parliamentarism," in principle, in the sense of an absolute and categorical repudiation of participation in the elections and the parliamentary revolutionary work, cannot, therefore, bear criticism, and is a naive, childish doctrine, which is founded sometimes on a healthy disgust of politicians, but which does not understand the possibilities of revolutionary parliamentarism. Besides, very often this doctrine is connected with a quite erroneous idea of the role of the party, which in this case is considered not as a fighting, centralized, advance guard of the workers, but as a decentralized system of badly joined revolutionary nuclei.

17. On the other hand, an acknowledgement of the value of parliamentary work in no wise leads to an absolute, in-all-and-any-case acknowledgement of the necessity of concrete elections and a concrete participation in parliamentary sessions. The matter depends upon a series of specific conditions. Under certain circumstances it may become necessary to leave the parliament. The Bolsheviks did so when they left the pre-parliament in order to break it up, to weaken it, and to set up against it the Petrograd Soviet, which was then prepared to head the uprising; they acted in the same way in the Constituent Assembly on the day of its dissolution, converting the Third Congress of Soviets into the centre of political events. In other circumstances a boycotting of the elections may be necessary, and a direct, violent storming of both the great bourgeois State apparatus and the parliamentary bourgeois clique, or a participation in the elections with a boycott of the parliament itself, etc.

18. In this way, while recognizing as a general rule the necessity of participating in the election to the central parliament, and the institutions of local self-government, as well as in the work of such institutions, the Communist Party must decide the question concretely, according to the specific conditions of the given moment. Boycotting the elections or the parliament, or leaving the parliament, is permissible, chiefly when there is a possibility of an immediate transition to an armed fight for power.

19. At the same time one must constantly bear in mind the relative unimportance of this question. If the center of gravity lies in the struggle for the power outside the parliament, then naturally the question of a proletarian dictatorship and a mass fight for it is immeasurably greater than the secondary one of using the parliament.

20. Therefore the Communist International insists categorically that it considers any division or attempt at a division within the Communist Parties along this line a crime against the labor movement. The Congress calls upon all the elements which are in favor of the mass struggle for the proletarian dictatorship, and of being under the direction of a centralized party of the revolutionary proletariat for gaining influence over all the mass organizations of the working class, to strive for a complete unity between the Communist elements, notwithstanding any possible disagreement on the question of utilizing the bourgeois parliaments.

## II. Revolutionary Parliamentarism

For securing the real execution of revolutionary parliamentary tactics it is necessary that:

1. The Communist Party in general and its Central Committee should, during the preparatory stage, before the parliamentary elections, inspect very carefully the quality of the personnel of the parliamentary factions. The Central Committee should be responsible for the parliamentary Communist faction. The Central Committee shall have the undeniable right to reject any candidate of any organizations, if it is not perfectly convinced that such candidate will carry on a real Communist policy while in parliament.

The Communist parties must desist from the old Social Democratic habit of electing as delegates only the so-called "experienced" parliamentarians, chiefly lawyers and so on. As a rule workmen should be put forward as candidates, without troubling about the fact that these may be sometimes simple rank-and-file workmen. The Communist Party must treat with merciless contempt all elements who try to make a career by joining the party just before the elections in order to get into parliament. The Central Committees of Communist parties must sanction the candidacy of only such men as by long years of work have proved their unwavering loyalty to the working class.

2. When the elections are over, the organization of the parliamentary fractions must be wholly in the hands of the Central Committee of the Communist Party -- whether the party in general is a lawful or unlawful one at the given moment. The chairman and the bureau of the parliamentary fraction of Communists must be confined in their functions by the Central Committee of the Party. The Central Committee of the Party must have its permanent representative in the parliamentary fraction with the right of veto. On all important political questions the parliamentary fraction shall get preliminary instructions from the Central Committee of the Party.

At each forthcoming important debate of the Communists in the parliament, the Central Committee shall be entitled and bound to appoint or reject the orator of the fraction, to demand that he submit previously the theses of his speech, or the text, for confirmation by the Central Committee, etc. Each candidate entered in the list of the Communists must sign a paper to the effect that at the first request of the Central Committee of the Party he shall be bound to give up his mandate, in order that in a given situation the act of leaving the parliament may be executed in unison.

3. In countries where reformist, semi-reformist or simply career-seeking elements have managed to penetrate into the parliamentary fraction of the Communists (as has already happened in several places), the Central Committees of the Communist Parties are bound radically to weed out the personnel of the fractions, on the principle that it is better for the cause of the working class to have a small but truly Communist fraction than a large one without a regular Communist line of conduct.

4. A Communist delegate, by decision of the Central Committee, is bound to combine lawful work with unlawful work. In countries where the Communist delegate enjoys a certain inviolability, this must be utilized by way of rendering assistance to illegal organizations and for the propaganda of the party.

5. The Communist members shall make all their parliamentary work dependent on the work of the Party outside the parliament. The regular proposing of demonstrative measures, not for the purpose of having them passed by the bourgeois majority, but for the purpose of propaganda, agitation, and organization, must be carried on under the direction of the party and its Central Committee.

6. In the event of labor demonstrations in the streets or other revolutionary movements, the Communist members must occupy the most conspicuous place -- at the head of the proletarian masses.

7. The Communist deputies must try to get in touch (under the control of the party) with the revolutionary workingmen, peasants, and

other workers either by correspondence or otherwise. They must in no way act like the Social Democratic deputies who carry on mere business relations with the constituents. They must always be at the disposal of the Communist organizations for propaganda work in the country.

8. Each Communist member must remember that he is not a "legislator" who is bound to seek agreements with the other legislators, but an agitator of the Party, detailed into the enemy's camp in order to carry out the orders of the Party there. The Communist member is answerable not to the wide mass of his constituents, but to his own Communist Party -- whether lawful or unlawful.

9. The Communist members must speak in parliament in such a way as to be understood by every workman, peasant, washwoman, shepherd; so that the Party may publish his speeches and spread them to the most remote villages of the country.

10. The rank-and-file Communist worker must not shrink from speaking in the bourgeois parliaments, and not give way to the so-called experienced parliamentarians, even if such workmen are novices in parliamentary methods. In case of need the workmen members may read their speeches from notes, in order that the speech may be printed afterwards in the papers or in leaflet form.

11. The Communist members must make use of the parliamentary tribune to denounce not only the bourgeoisie and its hangers-on, but also for the denunciation of the social patriots, reformists, the half-and-half politicians of the centre and other opponents of Communism, and for the wide propagation of the ideas of the Third International.

12. The Communist members, even though there should be only two or one of them in the parliament, should by their whole conduct challenge capitalism, and never forget that only those are worthy of the name of Communists, who not in words only but in deeds are the mortal enemy of the bourgeois order and its social-patriotic flunkys.

SOURCE: Theses and Statutes of the Third (Communist) International  
Adopted by the Second Congress July 17-August 7, 1920.  
Publishing Office of the Communist International Moscow, 1920